
FIRE FACT NO. 013 CHECKLIST(s): 99
TITLE : EXITING DURING CONSTRUCTION
CHECKLIST ITEM(s) : 99-04
REFERENCE(s) : 91-101/31-1.1, 31-1.8
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ALL EXITS

Kansas Statute 31-133 designates the Kansas State Fire Marshal as responsible for promulgating regulations to govern the maintenance and construction of exits in all buildings in Kansas other than one and two family dwellings.

Historically, the most significant loss of life in buildings from fire is when exits are locked, blocked and/or obstructed. Fire prevention inspections have documented a disturbing number of exit obstructions in schools, colleges, health care, and assembly areas in the state of Kansas.

The Kansas State Fire Marshal is putting all building owners/operators on notice. All required or marked exits must be maintained and accessible at all times. An exit shall extend from the area inside the exit door to an area outside leading to a public way or street.

EXITING FROM SCHOOLS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Exiting deficiencies in buildings under construction continue to pose active threats to children's lives. Efforts to educate administrators, architects, engineers, and construction supervisors have not achieved safe exiting. K.S.A. 31-144 requires the state fire marshal to assure compliance and we intend to take additional stronger measures to achieve this.

We recognize that assuring safe exiting during construction can be challenging. It may be necessary to consult a licensed fire protection engineer or other professional. Wherever exiting is inadequate, the state fire marshal's office will take all necessary steps to protect the lives of school children including immediate evacuation and in these cases, buildings may remain unusable for classes until the problem is corrected and appropriate planning for continuous safe exiting is shown.

TEMPORARY EXITING ALL BUILDINGS

Architects and engineers determine the configuration of new buildings, new additions, and scope of remodeling projects. As the authority having jurisdiction in the matters of building exits, the KSFMO **will** hold the licensed designers responsible during the construction process with the owner. The architects or engineers are expected to perform life safety evaluations at the outset of new work to assure that existing exiting will not be impaired or impeded by new construction.

SEE Examples on page two.



Kansas State Fire Marshal Prevention Division

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- 1) If the Uniform Building Code requires rated corridors then any temporary corridor construction shall not reduce the rating requirement. New corridor construction shall be a one-hour fire resistive assembly.
- 2) If the Uniform Building Code prohibits dead-end corridors over 20 feet long, the new addition shall not create one. If the corridor passes through the area of construction all features required in a permanent corridor shall be required in the temporary one, including the exit discharge to a public street or way.
- 3) If the Uniform Building Code requires one hour fire rated stair enclosures to the exterior of the building, then extending the exit path during a construction project requires certain levels of life safety must also be extended, even when the existing stairs are non-conforming. The reason is that the travel distance to the exterior exit discharge has been extended.
- 4) If building occupants exit through a corridor to the exterior, it is not acceptable to place an intervening room in this path as this violates the Uniform Building Code.
- 5) The use of "Not an Exit" signage is no longer acceptable by the Kansas State Fire Marshal. It is more appropriate to direct occupants to available exits by better signs and guidance.

The codes have not changed; merely the Kansas State Fire Marshal is reacting to a documented problem, which must not be permitted to continue. With written permission in advance, the Kansas State Fire Marshal has permitted the temporary use of a "fire watch" when an exit system is impaired. A "fire watch" is a compensatory measure that will allow a facility to operate under a supervised level of life safety. (See Fire Fact # 033). Due to the high number of blocked exits during construction we strongly recommend a daily program where an assigned individual of the facility walks each entire exit path at least hourly.